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ASSISTANCE IN MINE CLEARANCE

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

CONVENTION ON PROHIBITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS WHICH MAY BE DEEMED TO BE EXCESSIVELY INJURIOUS OR TO HAVE INDISCRIMINATE EFFECTS

Letter dated 14 May 1996 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the European Union I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a declaration of the European Union on anti-personnel land-mines (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 34, 71 and 75 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Lorenzo FERRARIN
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/51/50.

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Declaration by the European Union on anti-personnel land-mines

At the closure of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, the European Union recalls that it has, over the last years, redoubled its efforts to combat the severe consequences caused to civilians by the indiscriminate use of land-mines, in particular anti-personnel mines.

The European Union, which had adopted in May 1995 a joint action in order to reconfirm its commitment to the objective of an overall strengthening of Protocol II to the Convention, considers that the achievements of the Review Conference (such as the extension of the scope of Protocol II, the strengthening of restrictions on the use of mines, the new and immediate prohibitions regarding transfers, the provisions on technological cooperation and assistance, the regular review mechanism, etc.), taken together, are significant steps forward, both in terms of the land-mines Protocol itself and of the development of international humanitarian law.

The European Union, however, underlines that the results of the Review Conference fall short of its expectations and of some of the goals set out in its joint action. In particular, the European Union should have liked an effective and binding verification mechanism and no periods of deferral of compliance, or at least much shorter ones.

The European Union is convinced that the conclusion of this Review Conference is only the beginning of a challenging process which requires constant and widespread efforts and persistence in order to achieve fully its basic humanitarian objectives. The European Union will continue to seek solutions to the problems caused by anti-personnel land-mines and will strive towards the goal of their eventual elimination as stated in General Assembly resolution 50/70 (O). In the meantime, the States members of the European Union will seek early ratification of the amended Protocol II, as well as of the new Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons, and will take urgent steps to ensure their compliance with all the provisions of these two protocols pending their entry into force.

The European Union will also continue to lend active efforts with a view to achieving universal adherence to the Convention, since its objectives can only be effectively attained through implementation of its provisions by the widest number of States and parties to conflicts.

Furthermore, the European Union recalls its determination to pursue its contribution to the international mine clearance efforts. The European Union has already contributed to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund, financing in